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Bideford
Rural District Council

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Annual Report

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

and the

SURVEYOR AND INSPECTOR

for the year

1949

Gazette Printing Service Bideford

Bideford Rural District Council

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Annual Report

For the year 1949

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

Medical Officer of Health :
Dr. N. BOWRING BETTS, F.R.C.S.

Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector :
Mr. I. C. WILLIAMS, A.I.A.S., A.M.I.S.E., M.R.S.I.

Clerk :
Mrs. P. M. LOWE

Assistants :
Mr. A. ROWE, Cert. Inst. Hygiene.
Mr. J. W. WHITEFIELD, Cert. Inst. Hygiene.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The chief occupations of the inhabitants of the District are directly or indirectly associated with agriculture. A great deal of the work is brought about by the popularity of the district for visitors. Many hotels boarding houses and farms specialise in seasonal catering.

STATISTICS

Area (Acres)	53,570
Population (Estimated)	5,210
Number of Inhabited Houses	1,516
Rateable Value (as at 31.3.50)	£19,251
Sum represented by a Penny Rate (as at 31.3.50)	£79/12/11.463

1949

ANNUAL REPORT

Of the Medical Officer of Health for the Bideford Rural District

Cleverdon House,

Bradworthy.

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit to you my Report dealing with the Public Health and general conditions of the district during the year 1949.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

N. BOWRING BETTS,

Medical Officer of Health.

VITAL STATISTICS

Births	**1949**
Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population ..	15.3
Birth Rate per 1,000 for England and Wales	16.7
Still Birth Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) Births	36.2

Deaths	
Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population ..	15.3
Corrected Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	14.8
Death Rate per 1,000 for England and Wales	11.7

Deaths from Puerperal Causes	Deaths **1949**	Rate per 1,000 (Live and Still Births) **1949**
Puerperal Sepsis	1	12.0
Other Puerperal Causes	2	24.2
Total	3	36.2

Deaths of Infants under One Year of Age	**1949**
Legitimate	1
Illegitimate	1

Death Rate	**1949**
All Infants per 1,000 live births	25
Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	13.7
All Infants per 1,000 live births (England and Wales)	32
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	12
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	0
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	0
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	0

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA

Hospitals

1. **Tuberculosis**

   There are no hospitals for the reception of tuberculous patients in this District. Advanced cases are usually treated at Hawley Sanatorium, Barnstaple. Convalescent patients from this district are sometimes sent to the Devon County Council's large and well-equipped sanatorium at Hawkmoor, South Devon.

2. **Isolation of Infectious Diseases.**

   Any cases of infectious diseases which cannot be isolated or properly cared for at home, are conveyed to the Bideford and District Joint Isolation Hospital, which comprises 30 beds, 4 cots and 8 observation cubicles.

During 1949 6 cases were admitted to the Isolation Hospital from the Bideford Rural District, patients suffering from Scarlet Fever 1, from Diphtheria 0, from Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis 0, and 5 from Anterior Poliomyelitis.

3. **Smallpox**
The Smallpox Hospital of the Devon County Council provides treatment for any case of smallpox that may arise in this District.

4. **General**
The Bideford and District Hospital serves the District extremely well for General Medical and Surgical treatment. The Hospital contains about 51 beds. Extension work is in progress and it is hoped it will be completed by the end of 1950. Hospital facilities are also available at the North Devon Infirmary, Barnstaple, and the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, Exeter.

District Nursing
There are six District Nurses, all qualified midwives, working in the District.

Laboratory Facilities
Bacteriological examinations are undertaken by the Public Health Laboratory Service at 7, Dix's Field, Exeter, the Director is Dr. Moore.
Chemical analyses are carried out by Public Analysts, Messrs. Tickle and Reynolds, of Queen Street, Exeter.

Disinfection of Infected Bedding and Clothing
By arrangement with the Bideford and District Joint Isolation Hospital Board, any infected bedding and clothing can be disinfected in the steam disinfecting apparatus at the Isolation Hospital.

Ambulance Facilities
There is a St. John Ambulance stationed at Bideford, which serves the Rural District. There is also a separate ambulance stationed at the Isolation Hospital, which is used for the conveyance of patients suffering from any of the notifiable infectious diseases.

Ante-Natal Clinics
An ante-natal clinic is held at Bideford.

Child Welfare Clinic
There are Child Welfare Clinics held at Hartland and Bideford.

Venereal Diseases
A Clinic for venereal disease is held at the North Devon Infirmary twice weekly.

Orthopaedic Clinic
A Clinic is held twice a month at Barnstaple.

Birth Control Clinic
A Clinic is held once a month at the North Devon Dispensary, Barnstaple.

PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Notifications

Diseases	*Total number of cases notified* **1949**	*Cases admitted to hospital* **1949**	*Total deaths* **1949**
Scarlet Fever	1	1	0
Diphtheria	0	0	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	0	0	0
Pneumonia	1	0	0
Dysentery	0	0	0
Erysipelas	0	0	0
Opthalmia Neonatorum ..	0	0	0
Anterior Poliomyelitis and Polioencephalitis	6	5	2
Measles	98	0	0
Whooping Cough	1	0	0
Acute Encephalitis Lethargica	0	0	0
Cerebro Spinal Meningitis ..	0	0	0

Diphtheria Immunisation

A high proportion of the Children under 15 years of age have availed themselves of the above scheme. Each school in the district has been visited by the School Medical Officer for this purpose.

TUBERCULOSIS

The number of cases of Tuberculosis remaining on the register was as follows :—

		31st Dec. **1949**
(*a*) **Pulmonary**	Males	7
	Females	6
(*b*) **Non-Pulmonary**	Males	5
	Females	3
Total Cases on the register, December 31st,	1949 ..	21
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1948 ..	24
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1947 ..	22
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1946 ..	21
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1945 ..	16
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1944 ..	21
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1943 ..	23
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1942 ..	18
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1941 ..	17
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1940 ..	19
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1939 ..	18

1. New Cases

During the year 2 cases were notified in accordance with the regulations.

(*a*) **Pulmonary**	Males	0
	Females	1
(*b*) **Non-Pulmonary**	Males	1
	Females	0
	Totals	2

The following are the notification for the preceding eight years :—

	Pulmonary	*Non-Pulmonary*	*Total*
1948	0	4	4
1947	2	1	3
1946	3	2	5
1945	2	0	2
1944	4	0	4
1943	3	4	7
1942	5	1	6
1941	2	0	2

2. Age Periods (New Cases)

	Pulmonary **1949**		*Non-Pulmonary* **1949**	
	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 1 year	0	0	0	0
1 to 5 years	0	0	1	0
5 to 10 years	0	0	0	0
10 to 15 years	0	0	0	0
15 to 25 years	0	0	0	0
25 to 35 years	0	0	0	0
35 to 45 years	0	0	0	0
45 to 55 years	0	1	0	0
55 to 65 years	0	0	0	0
65 and over	0	0	0	0

MORTALITY FROM TUBERCULOSIS

Total Deaths, 1949—2 (Respiratory 1, Non-Respiratory 1).

Age Periods	*Respiratory*		*Non-Respiratory*	
	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 1 year	0	0	0	0
1 to 5 years	0	0	0	0
5 to 10 years	0	0	0	0
10 to 15 years	0	0	0	0
15 to 25 years	0	0	0	0
25 to 35 years	0	0	0	1
35 to 45 years	0	0	0	0
45 to 55 years	0	1	0	0
55 to 65 years	0	0	0	0
65 and over	0	0	0	0

CAUSES OF DEATH DURING THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW

Causes of Death	1949	
	M.	F.
Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers	0	0
Measles	0	0
Scarlet Fever	0	0
Whooping Cough	0	0
Diphtheria	0	0
Influenza	1	1
Encephalitis Lethargica	0	0
Acute Poliomyelitis	2	0
Cerebro-Spinal Fever	0	0
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	0	1
Other Tuberculosis Diseases	0	1
Syphilis	0	0
General Paralysis of the Insane, Tabes Dorsalis	0	0
Cancer, Malignant Disease	10	2
Diabetes	0	0
Intercranial Vascular Lesions	5	7
Heart Disease	13	9
Aneurism	0	0
Other Circulatory Diseases	0	4
Bronchitis	1	0
Pneumonia (all forms)	4	3
Other Respiratory Diseases	0	2
Peptic Ulcer	0	0
Diarrhoea, etc. (under 2 years)	0	0
Appendicitis	0	0
Cirrhosis of Liver	0	0
Other Diseases of Liver, etc.	0	0
Other Digestive Diseases	0	2
Acute and Chronic Nephritis	0	1
Puerperal Sepsis	0	1
Other Puerperal Causes	0	2
Congenital Debility, Premature Births, Malformations, etc.	1	0
Senility	0	0
Suicide	1	0
Road Traffic Accident	0	0
Other Violence	0	2
Other Defined Diseases	0	0
Causes Ill-Defined or Unknown	2	2
Special Causes (included above)—		
Small-pox	0	0
Poliomyelitis	0	0
Polioencephalitis	0	0
All Causes	40	40

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

N. BOWRING BETTS,

Medical Officer of Health.

1949

ANNUAL REPORT

Of the Surveyor and Inspector for the Bideford Rural District

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Council Offices,
Market Place,
Bideford.
August, 1950.

To the Chairman and Members of the Bideford Rural District Council.

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit to you a report relating to the work carried out by this department during the year 1949.

The Council will appreciate that during the year under review my predecessor, Mr. I. C. Williams, was responsible for the work undertaken by the department, but owing to the fact that he left to take another post with Alcester Rural District Council, very early in 1950, the work of compiling this report has been carried out by myself with the able assistance of the members of this department and of the Clerk to the Council, Mr. C. T. Braddick, which assistance I recognise with thanks.

The report deals with conditions as found in the district at the end of the year, and I am pleased to report that, as will be seen in the next annual report for the current year, progress in all branches of the work is being maintained.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

L. J. DUNN.

Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor.

Post War Housing Programme

Despite the many difficulties which confront the problem in this rural district, the Council have maintained housing progress as far as has been possible, but, lack of sufficient and satisfactory water supplies on various sites acquired, and lack of water on other proposed sites, have been outstanding difficulties.

A site for four houses at Woolsery was acquired some time ago but development has not taken place owing to the unsatisfactory quality of the water. A site at Newton St. Petrock earmarked for development for four houses is similarly placed, and a site acquired at Welcombe for two houses is still awaiting development, and this is due to the unsatisfactory quality of the water obtainable from the well on this site.

It is anticipated that the mains of the North Devon Water Board will bring a supply of water to some parts of the District in which the need is great ; these will allow the housing programme to progress more speedily than has been possible. The supply will also be taken to various Estates in the District where the existing water supplies are proving insufficient during the summer months.

The following table gives the housing position at the end of the year with regard to Pre-War, War-Time and Post-War houses :—

Pre-War Houses	
Abbotsham	2
Alwington	4
Buckland Brewer	2
Clovelly	2
Hartland	4
Littleham	2
Monkleigh	2
Parkham	6
Woolsery	2
Total	26
War-Time Houses	
In 1944 the Council built four Houses :—	
Natcott, Hartland	2
Crosspark, Woolsery	2
Total	4
Post-War Houses	
Abbotsham	6
Alwington	4
Buckland Brewer	8
Bulkworthy	2
Clovelly	8
East Putford	2
Hartland	18
Monkleigh	12
Total	60

HOUSING ACT 1949

During the year the above-mentioned Act has come into operation and briefly, the terms of the Act so far as it affects this Rural District is to encourage the improvement of existing houses by awarding grants to premises suitable for improvement and which will come up to the standard laid down by the Ministry of Health.

The Act replaces the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts under which 79 houses were reconditioned in this district. Undoubtedly this new Housing Act will become popular when its terms are known by the general public and it is envisaged that the Act will provide many improved dwellings, which but for the advent of the Act, may have been allowed to fall into disrepair owing to the expense of carrying out repairs to property.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT

Water Supplies

The only Villages in the District which are served by main water supplies are as follows :—

Abbotsham (Water obtained from the Northam Urban District Council mains ; reservoir at Melbury).
Buckland Brewer.
Clovelly
Hartland (War-time emergency scheme only).

For the remainder of the district the present water supply position is very unsatisfactory in so far that reliance is placed on private and public wells, a great majority of which have proved insufficient in quantity and unsatisfactory in quality.

As mentioned elsewhere in the report the North Devon Water Board which it is envisaged will bring water to this district towards the end of 1951, will serve a great part of the district, and no doubt other parts of the district will be served by branch mains from the trunk mains as a supplementary programme when the present contracts have been completed.

The North Devon Water Board have a scheme in hand, which it is hoped will be soon implemented ; it will provide a water supply to Higher Clovelly and the Hartland area from Burford.

The proposal includes for a 250,000 gallon surface reservoir together with a new main to be laid to Hartland.

The Board are also to provide treatment works to the water supply for Clovelly Village, consequent upon a series of samples of water taken over a period having proved unsatisfactory.

It may be possible to augment this supply from the Burford supply in summer, as the supply is short at the peak periods, due no doubt partially to the large influx of visitors.

Water Sampling

41 samples of water were taken for bacteriological analyses during the year, and where the results proved the water to be unsatisfactory from a public or private well, steps were taken to inform the consumers that until such time as permanent improvements in the water supply can be effected, by the provision of a mains supply or otherwise, all water to be used for domestic purposes must be boiled or suitably treated.

It will be seen that as mentioned previously an appreciable proportion of the samples taken from proposed housing estate supplies were unsatisfactory, causing the delay in development of the sites in question.

Private Wells		*Council House Estates or Proposed Sites Water Supplies*		*Public Supplies*	
Satis.	Unsatis.	Satis.	Unsatis.	Satis.	Unsatis.
5	14	3	11	3	5

Sewerage

The following Villages in the district are served by a main sewerage scheme :—

Abbotsham
Clovelly
Buckland Brewer
Horns Cross
Hartland
Parkham
Woolsery

It will be seen from the above that few of the Villages and Hamlets in the District are provided with sewerage schemes, and of those mentioned above conditions existing at Parkham, Buckland Brewer and Woolsery are unsatisfactory. It is anticipated that conditions at Buckland Brewer will be improved during the coming year by the installation of entirely new sewers and sewage disposal works. At Woolsery the defect in the disposal system lies in the filter bed which is very inadequate and is scheduled for complete renewal in the near future.

Three lengths of sewer at Parkham drain to three common cesspits which are very unsatisfactory owing to the overflow from same which passes from them in two instances to a stream, causing pollution, and in the third instance on to a field. The Council in 1939 commenced surveying and levelling for an improvement in the disposal from the three sewers above-mentioned, but the work was interrupted owing to the advent of War, and this Village is now one of the first to be dealt with for entirely new sewers and sewage disposal works.

Improvement in the outfall to the sewer at Clovelly has been approved by the Ministry of Health and tenders have been invited and work should proceed shortly.

The Council is to provide separate sewerage schemes in the following built-up areas :—

Alwington (Fairy Cross and Ford)
Bucks Mills
Higher Clovelly
Littleham
Monkleigh
Saltrens
Stoke

In the remainder of the District the density of houses is too low for any sewerage scheme and individual houses rely on separate drainage systems.

This department has now for some time assisted in this work by providing plans of standard type septic tanks, which are suitable for individual properties, the size can be adjusted as necessary to allow for the correct detention period in the tanks. Final disposal of effluent is to soakaway pits in the sub-soil, filled with stone, clinker or similar materials.

PUBLIC CLEANSING

The Collection of refuse is carried out in the District by contract with this Council as follows :—

Abbotsham	Bi-monthly
Clovelly Village	Twice weekly
Higher Clovelly	Monthly
Hartland Town	Weekly
Stoke	Monthly

Disposal of refuse in the areas given above is to dumps situated near the village served.

In addition to the above, refuse dumps are provided near the following Villages, and the Villagers are themselves responsible for the disposal of refuse to the dumps :—

Alwington
Monkleigh
Parkham
Woolsery

The Parish Council of Buckland Brewer has provided a dump on the outskirts of the Village and in this case the Villagers are responsible for disposal of refuse themselves.

A great portion of the district has no refuse collection whatsoever, and in those areas served at present the charge is a Parish rate, but it is felt the whole system of refuse collection must at some future date be dealt with as a district collection and the charge made a district rate, thus eliminating considerable nuisance over dumps, some near Villages, where only crude tipping is practised, and providing a more hygienic service in the type of vehicle used for collection.

SMOKE ABATEMENT

No nuisances relating to smoke have been reported to the department and as a consequence no action has been taken.

SWIMMING BATHS AND POOLS

There are no public or privately owned swimming baths or pools in the district.

ERADICATION OF BED BUGS

It is satisfactory to note that, in this District, no complaints relating to the existence of bed bugs have been received and accordingly no action has been taken.

SCHOOLS

During the year under review a complaint was received by this Council relating to the use of a loft as a classroom at Hartland.

Inspections of the premises were made and representations on the use of same were submitted to the Northern Divisional Executive of the Education Department, and as a result of the facts put forward, the Divisional Executive agreed that the use of the loft for instructional purposes should cease forthwith.

POLLUTION OF RIVERS AND STREAMS

Periodic inspections of Rivers and Streams in the District have not revealed any gross pollution, but improvement in the conditions of Rivers and Streams will result generally when sewerage schemes incorporating properly constructed sewage disposal works have been provided to Villages and Hamlets.

FARM WATER SUPPLIES

At the request of the Devon Agricultural Executive Committee the department have undertaken the investigation of twenty proposed farm water supply schemes.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTIONS

The total number of inspections, revisits and interviews made in connection with the work of the department during the year was 1,147 made up as follows :—

Water Supplies	157
Drainage	196
Public Conveniences	6
Refuse Collection	6
Refuse Disposal	6
Schools	1
Miscellaneous Sanitary Visits	144
Sewerage	48
Number of Houses inspected	20
Miscellaneous Housing Visits	488
Houses inspected for overcrowding	6
Food Premises	12
Cowsheds	16
Ice Cream	8
Catering Establishments	19
Dairies and Milkshops	4
Infectious Disease	3
Tents, Vans, Sheds	5
Stables and Piggeries	2
	1.147

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, 1938

Regular inspections have been made of twelve premises which have been licensed for the preparation or manufacture of sausages and potted, pressed or pickled meat, and seven premises approved for the sale/or manufacture and sale of ice cream.

Inspections of catering establishments have been carried out periodically during the year.

MILK AND DAIRIES ACTS

During the year the Milk and Dairies Acts 1949 have come into operation, and as a result the department has no further authority over cowsheds and " Producer/Retailer of Milk " premises. There are no designated bottling establishments in the district, and neither are there any " Non Producer/Retailers " in the district.

Sampling of milk is now undertaken by the National Agricultural Advisory Service of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Prior to coming into operation of the new Milk and Dairies Acts, the sampling Officers of the Public Health Department of the Devon

County Council were responsible for sampling designated milk supplies and milk supplied under the "Milk in Schools Scheme" and the results of samples taken during the year were as follows :—

Designation	*Pass*	*Fail*	*Total*
Tuberculin Tested	114	32	146
Accredited	37	7	44
Ungraded	4	—	4

BUILDING LICENSING, 1949

The summary set out below gives details of building licences issued by this Council during the year :—

Housing Repairs

No. of Licences granted	7
Total cost	£1,613

Conversion, Adaptations and Additions

No. of Licences granted	9
No. of additional family units provided ..	7
Total cost	£4,636

New Dwellings by Private Enterprise

No. of Licences granted	5
Total cost	£7,600

PLANS

From details given below it will be seen that the number of plans dealt with by the department under the Building Byelaws of the Council and the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, has increased during the year.

It will be appreciated that work in connection with the submission of plans for approval entails a considerable amount of work and time spent in the district inspecting the various proposals from the Public Health and Planning point of view.

Details of Plans Submitted

No. approved under Building Byelaws	95
No. disapproved under Building Byelaws.. ..	—
No. approved under Town and Country Planning Act, 1947	82
No. disapproved under Town and Country Planning Act	5

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

L. J. DUNN.

Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor.